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Corzine bill would give Musconetcong protected status

Tuesday, May 24, 2005

From staff reports

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- U.S. Senator Jon S. Corzine introduced legislation Monday that would add 24 miles of the Musconetcong River to the National Wild and Scenic River System.

The Musconetcong Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, sponsored in the House by U.S. Representative Scott Garrett, would add the river to a national system of protected waterways making it eligible for millions of dollars in federal preservation support.

"The Musconetcong is a natural treasure, and one that deserves our every effort to preserve," Corzine said. "This legislation is a necessary step to ensure that future generations can experience what New Jerseyans have always enjoyed: access to a pristine, scenic waterway. Many of the municipalities along the river lack the financial resources to adequately protect it for our children. That is why this act is so important."

Corzine and Garrett's legislation directs the secretary of the Interior to manage the river in accordance with the Musconetcong River Management Plan, a strategy created by state and local governments and nonprofit organizations to protect the river and balance competing demands on its resources. The plan outlines several objectives for protecting the river, which include maintaining and improving water quality, guarding fisheries, protecting scenic vistas, and enhancing public access to the river for recreation.

The Musconetcong River is a 43-mile river that runs westward from Lake Musconetcong to the Delaware River at Riegelsville. It provides many ecological, recreational and scenic benefits to the northwestern portion of New Jersey. It is home to a number of archeological sites and other historic areas, including a site in Warren County where scientists discovered stone knives and other weapons dating back 10,000 years or more. It also feeds aquifers that provide many residents in Hunterdon and Warren counties with quality drinking water.

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